

# Mohave County Miner.

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## Real Life in Alaska.

The following letter from W. D. Nickens to Colonel W. J. Fife, dated January 30, is interesting, as giving a view of Alaskan experience and comment somewhat different from the usual reports:

My Dear Wife—Have not written sooner because I have been knocked out of the box. I contracted a very severe cold which settled all over me. I was compelled to stay in doors for 10 days and confined to my bed most of the time. It is rather a large proposition to get sick up here. However, I am fast getting all right once more. It is much colder here than down on the Sound.

Cold, raw winds prevail. The north wind is particularly raw. There has been no rain to speak of since I came here. I understand the spring and summer is the rainy season. The last issue of the Dyes Trail says you are coming up. Well, after all that is the only way to get at it. One must hear and see from their own standpoint, and not through the eyes and ears of others. Both this town and Skagway are lively in some respects and dull in others. Too many come here looking for work. It is lively in the building line and would be much brisker if lumber could be had; it is very high. There is plenty of teasing. Hay 80¢ per ton.

In the sporting line it is very dull. Gamblers kicking like h—; they are sick. The women never struck such a hard proposition in their lives. There are few of them eating regular and I think they all at present wish themselves where they came from. Saloons are doing a little better, but nothing to brag of. Dance halls are not. It is worse than pulling teeth to get enough on the floor to have a shake down. Drinks and cigars in saloons are 25 cents. It costs 50 cents to dance. In fact the people coming in here are not blowing themselves. Those that are going to the Yukon are too busy and too far from their destination to be spending their money. They realize that their trials have just commenced and that they will need every cent of money they have. Those that are working around here have apparently profited by the experience of the last five or six years and are here to try and save a few dollars. They are all a long way from their homes, and there is no way of getting back without putting up good hard money and quite a little of that. There are no side door Pullmans or brake beams up this way and you can't take your blankets on your back and walk out—so the steamship companies are sure of their prey. Quite a number are working over this and the Skagway trails. Some weaken when they see what they have to encounter and sell their outfits. So far as the serenity of the thing is concerned, it all depends upon the character of the individual and his equipment. There is one thing I want to remind you, and that is that the newspaper talk of the Sound papers and those up here, particularly the paper here—their statements are not worthy of consideration. They are publishing only the improbable and frequently the impossible. They put in only the miraculous. Nearly everything that is published is exaggerated and magnified out of all resemblance to the real thing, if, indeed, there was any foundation to it whatever. You hear only of those that come out with a few dollars. You can read all about the rosy part of the affair, but there are others that you don't and won't hear of, because the papers are not presenting that side of the story. You see all the agencies that give out the news to the public are interested parties—newspapers, transportation companies, men owning claims in the Yukon and business men selling outfits to people going in or making money out of the excitement in some way or another. It is like going into a lodge—just as soon as you get in—you put your shoulder to the wheel to get in the next one. Last summer the Post used to publish the names and residences of the parties coming in from the Yukon and the amount of gold brought in by each one. Two men who came up on the boat with me and who had spent a little since in Seattle thought they would run down one of the parties that had been published as coming out with 80,

000. The man was found and he said he did not get out with 80 cents. The reporter takes the passenger list from the purser and puts down the amounts they bring out to suit himself. A good many reliable men coming in from the Yukon tell me that on account of the scarcity and high price of provisions that it only pays to work the very richest claims, and for that reason there will not be such a large output of gold as many predict and what is expected. Still, you will find that the North American Transportation & Trading Company and the newspapers will have it large enough to please the most ardent enthusiast. You can't work a 10¢, 15¢ or even a 20¢ a day claim over there this winter. It won't pay. Going over the police charge 25 per cent. duty on everything you have. You pay 25 cents a cord for the wood to thaw your ground and 7¢ for logs for a cabin. You then prospect by thawing out your ground to bedrock; if there is nothing, why there you are. Before you can do anything at all 15¢ will have to be plunked up for a miner's license. There are other and numerous demands which I have not mentioned to make you go down into your pocket. At every turn you will have to go down for the long green. The report now is that you can't get by the customs office with less than 1,000 pounds of solid food; it was 600 pounds at one time. You see, the more supplies the more duty. I am informed that they slap it on to firearms at the highest figure. I guess they don't want an army of miners over there with arms and ammunition. The miners might get to carrying a little and the police would not be in it, but if the miners have no arms, they are harmless.

I am satisfied that the Yukon is rich, and if you can equip yourself for an 18 months or two years' stay and have luck you are liable to come out with the long green. It is a gamble and if the cards come your way why then you can go to Paris in 1900. But if they don't, which of course, will happen to the majority, it will be hard for them to get home. If you come don't bring any mackinaw clothing. Get a duck suit with the coat oil skinned lined, or a leather coat, corduroy lined, one or two pairs of German socks with overboots, a pair of wool lined mits, a cap, and of course, wool underclothes and socks. In summer you can wear just what you would there, but now it takes warm clothes. Mackinaws have proved a disappointment to everyone. You will need blankets. It of course makes a difference whether one is outside or inside or whether he is going into the interior. Rubber boots are necessary or, rather, will be. Just now it is frozen up and the sledding is excellent. I heard last night that the Burns tramway were taking stuff from here to the summit for four cents. If that is true, it is claimed by those who ought to know that that is the cheapest and best thing to do. It is about 12 miles from here before you reach the mountain to begin the ascent.

Regards to everyone. Yours, W. D. NICKENS.—Tacoma News.

## Looking for Suckers.

A Dawson letter says: "A large number of people are leaving with claims to sell to the outside public. They firmly believe that the excitement still rages in the states and elsewhere, and that they will be able to dispose of their bonded interests at fabulous prices to feverish and anxious capital. No sane man would invest in Klondike properties without a report or examination from some engineer or expert. Many of the schemes will not bear very close inspection."

"Without mentioning names, I will say that one party of men have staked on the Klondike itself and hope to sell the claims on account of the name. No gold has been discovered in paying quantities on the Klondike, and it will be almost an impossibility to work there if gold should be found, excepting on the bars."

"I have visited all the principal mines on the creeks and have panned myself at random on several of them. I have panned out as high as 38¢ in one pan and as low as 75 cents. Three days ago I saw a pan going 170¢, in which was a nugget weighing 60.50¢. This was on a bench claim on Skookum Pup. This,

however, was from what is probably a rich pocket of very coarse gold."

"Many varied reports have been sent out in regard to the richness of the claims. There is no question but what the deposits are remarkably rich in gold, but on taking into consideration the enormous cost of working—the scarcity of fuel, the large amount of waste gravel which must necessarily be mixed and hoisted with the rich pay streak, on account of the crude system of mining, the expenses are so great that the pay dirt must of necessity be very rich to pay a fair profit to the owner."

"Stampedes to new discoveries are of almost daily occurrence. It is not an uncommon sight to see a party of four or five with an axe and blankets to each man tearing up one of the creeks, when men at the windlass will drop everything, grasp the first axe and follow at their best speed. I, myself, with Bond, went on a stampede up the Klondike about a week ago. We had received a confidential tip that there was a new strike on a small creek 25 miles from Dawson. The thermometer registered from 40 to 50 degrees below zero the entire three days we were out, and we found at the end of our journey a miserable little pup, as the small creeks are called, not worth looking at."

"The new creeks, Hunker and Sulphur, command the most attention now, and if the stories can be believed of pans running 2¢ to 3¢, they must have some very promising claims there."—Tacoma News.

## Petrified Forest Protection.

Land Commissioner Hermann is at work on a special report to the Secretary of the Interior, recommending that a forest reserve be made out of the petrified forest of Arizona.

Recent reports received by the Interior Department about the condition of this forest indicate that it is rapidly being used up for commercial purposes, and unless the government steps in to stop the despoliation, the whole forest, which is one of the greatest natural curiosities in the world, will disappear. There is now building in Denver a hotel, all the walls of which are to be faced with the silicified wood to be taken from the forest, and all the tables for the hotel are also to be made of it. At this rate of consumption it would not be long before all the petrified wood would be used up. Commissioner Hermann thinks that there is immediate necessity for action on the part of the Department. It is his opinion the best way in which the forest can be preserved is to make it a forest reserve.

The forest is located near Holbrook, in Apache county, Arizona. The largest and finest specimens of silicified wood in the world are taken from it. Whole trunks of trees and stumps with portions of the roots are found there, converted into stone as dense and hard as the finest agate. Every cell and every fiber of the former wood is preserved in stone. A forest of trees appear to have been entombed in the rocks and to have been preserved by a slow process of replacement by silica from solutions permeating the bed. Subsequently the surrounding sediments were washed away but the enduring fossils of the trees remained.

Tons upon tons of specimens have been taken away by collectors and dealers. A company has been formed in South Dakota for cutting and polishing stone for architectural and decorative work. Sections of these trees, 4 feet in diameter, and large enough for the tops of tables, have been cut and polished. Many specimens were shown at the Paris Exposition, where they were greatly admired for the perfect preservation of every detail of structure of the wood, for the very high polish, and for the exquisite interblending of colors in the mass, due to the presence of various oxides in the original silicifying solutions. No other country in the world, it is claimed, can send to the lapidary such magnificent raw material of this nature as the petrified forests of Arizona afford. Not even the imperial works at Ekaterinburg, in Russia, with their wealth of kalkansto jasper, massive malachite, and other superb ornamental stones, can rival the beauty of the agatized wood of Arizona.

Commissioner Hermann is confident

that Secretary Bliss will agree with him, when the facts are brought to his attention, of the wisdom of making some provision to protect this wonderful curiosity from despoliation.—M. & S. Press.

## The Salt Habit.

The use of salt as a condiment is so general and so universally believed in as necessary that we rarely hear a word against its excessive use, but there are a multitude of persons who eat far too much salt—eat it on everything, on meat, fish, potatoes, melons, in butter, on tomatoes, turnips and squash, in bread and on a host of foods too numerous to mention. To so great an extent is it used that no food is relished which has not a salty taste, and this hides more or less the real taste, which is often very delicate. Now, the amount of salt required in the system is comparatively small, and if the diet has been rightly compounded very little is necessary. Some go so far as to discard its use altogether, but whether this is wise or not we will not here consider. What are some of the evils of the excessive use of salt? They are to paralyze the nerves of taste, or to pervert them so they cannot enjoy anything which has not a salty flavor, and in addition there is a direct tax on both the skin and the kidneys in removing it from the blood. Whether the skin is harmed by this tax we do not know. Possibly it is not greatly injured, yet we know that few people possess a healthy skin; but it is now pretty well settled that an excessive use of salt does overtax the kidneys in its removal, and that the great number of cases of derangement and disease of these organs is due to this use. It takes only a little time to learn to enjoy many kinds of food without salt, and we advise our readers and others to look into this matter and to try and diminish the use of this condiment so far as possible. We believe they will be better for it.—Journal of Hygiene.

## An Important sale.

Frank A. Smith has closed another important mining deal for Michigan parties in the purchase from Sampson & Bent of their famous Centennial group of mines in the Gijfas mining district located about two miles north of the Grant group recently purchased by Toledo parties. The Centennial group is a large property, the main ledge or ore body raising many feet above the surface, forming a great dyke of gold bearing ore. Mr. Smith says that his sampling of eighty tons on the vein or ledge gave 33¢ per ton in gold. This is certainly very fine. But the mining engineer sent out by the company sampled the ore eighty feet across the vein or ledge and got 33¢ per ton. The estimate made of the ore in sight by the party was 21,000,000¢, which seems high, but it may be correct, as that is a very rich district and the ore bodies are very large.

It is the intention to put up a twenty-stamp mill at once and to commence reducing ores. It is estimated that this can be accomplished within sixty days.—Los Angeles Herald.

The largest mining deal which has taken place of late in California has just been perfected, says the San Francisco Chronicle. On Thursday last the property of the Royal Consolidated Mining company, located about three miles from Copperopolis, Calaveras county, was purchased by J. C. Kemp van Ee, a well known operator of London. It was an out and out sale, the price paid to the late owners, I. R. Wilbur of this city and

J. D. Peters and Mr. Cassell of Stockton, having been 400,000¢.

The property has the reputation of being the highest low grade proposition in California, the ore running nearly 10¢ a ton. It consists of six patented mining claims, the Emma, Good Enough, Royal, Royal Extension, Ant Hill and Pine and a patented mill site. The developments of the late owners have been confined to the Royal vein and the Royal and Good Enough claims and to only one ore chute. They proved, however, very profitable, having netted 50,000¢ per annum during the last four years and a half.

The Royal property has been under careful examination for many months by such experts as William A. Farish of Denver, William P. Miller of San Francisco, W. R. Beall of South Africa and John Barr of Glasgow, who substantially agree as to the amount of ore in sight. The figures given by Mr. Farish are 700,000 tons of first and 35,000 tons of second class, making a total of 105,000 tons actually in sight.

Mr. Kemp van Ee's purchase was largely made on future possibilities of the property being more cheaply and extensively worked. At present there is a small shaft to a depth of 700 feet. This is to be made a triple compartment and sunk with all possible speed to a depth of 1200 feet and ultimately to 16,000 feet. The twenty stamp mill, which has been crushing rock at the rate of thirty tons a day, is to make room for one of sixty stamps of 1100 pounds each, capable of crushing 240 pounds daily. New hoisting works are to be erected, 130 men put to work and the cost of mining and milling the 105,000 tons in sight reduced from 4 3/4¢ to 2 5/8¢ a ton.—Los Angeles Herald.

## Timber for Mines.

Commissioner of the General Land Office Hermann has decided to grant to mining companies the privilege of cutting all the timber they need from public lands of the United States to protect their mines, provided they follow the instructions of an inspector of the land office who will be sent to mining camps, upon request, to mark such trees as may be cut. Under the present system the mining companies in the west are so greatly hampered by restrictions of the government in obtaining the amount of timber which is actually required by them that some of them have been cutting timber in violation of the regulations, and suits for indemnity have been begun against them by the government.

Unless the mining companies can secure the timber needed to properly brace their mines they are either compelled to slack up in their operations or continue them with great risk to their employees. Commissioner Hermann believes that the best interests of both the mining companies and of the government will be subserved by allowing the companies to have the wood they need under the supervision of a government agent, who will see to it that no young trees are destroyed. This decision is one of the greatest importance to the mining states of the west, and will give mine owners great relief.—Silver Belt.

## Something More for the Trusts.

There is a proposition before one of the house committees to establish a new department to be known as the department of commerce and industry. It is certainly in order for the government to do something for the infant trusts, and this might accomplish it.—Butte, Mont., Miner.

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